GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2276
ANSWERED ON:17.03.2005
PROTECTION TO WOMEN IN TRAINS
Chowdhury Shri Adhir Ranjan

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Human Rights Commission has issued extensive direction to the Ministry of Railways to ensure protection of female passengers in trains, against sexual harassment;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken by the Railways on their implementation;

(d) whether the Commission has also asked for a report on the issue from the Railway Board;

(e) if so, whether the said report has since been sent to the Commission; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU)

(a) to (f): A statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2276 BY SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY AND TO BE ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON 17.3.2005 REGARDING PROTECTION TO WOMEN IN TRAINS.

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. The details of the recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) are given below:-

1. Although it was pointed out by the representatives of Ministry of Railways that instructions have already been issued by the Railway Board, regarding process of filing First Information Reports (FIRs) in running trains and display of information about it, it was reiterated that there are still complaints that the First Information Report (FIR) forms are not available and that it should be ensured that the forms are easily available and the public is provided with complete information about the procedure to be followed.

2. Railway Board should come up with appropriate notices at strategic points in all railway stations/coaches mentioning thereby the sexual assault, obscene remarks, stares, gestures, songs and unwanted attention were all forms of sexual harassment and therefore offences punishable by law under the IPC and the Railways Act. It was further suggested that the contents of the above notice could also be put on the Close Circuit TV at the Railway Platforms.

3. The Railways should also disseminate information at all Railway Stations as well as within the trains as to whom the women passengers should approach and lodge their complaints.

4. Train routes on which maximum complaints were registered should be given priority with regard to implementation of steps mentioned above.

5. The different functionaries attached to various trains ought to be sensitized to issues relating to women. The Railway Board may organise Gender Sensitization Programmes for which they could seek the help of the Non-Government Organization (NGO) " Jagori" and other women's groups involved in this issue and that they may be incorporated into the regular training programs conducted by the Ministry of Railways for their functionaries from time to time.

6. The Railway Ministry may form State level co-ordination committees with representatives of Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) in order to periodically review the progress of implementation of the measures taken for the safety of women passengers.

(c): The following actions have already been taken to implement the suggestions:-

1. Instructions have been reiterated to Zonal Railways that FIR Forms should be available with all the Travelling Ticket Examiners (TTEs), Train Superintendents, and Train Guards and with the Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Police personnel escorting the trains and that they should get them filled by aggrieved passengers and hand over the same to the Government Railway

Police Stations. For the period July to December, 2004 alone, the Railway Protection Force has received 533 FIRs including some cases of sexual harassment from the affected passengers and given to the concerned Railway Police for expeditious registration and enquiry.

2. Instructions to provide Unified Notice in all Metre Gauge (MG) and Broad Gauge (BG) coaches incorporating the Graphics on Eve teasing and detailing the process of lodging of FIR on running trains have already been issued to all Zonal Railways.

3. Announcements will be made at all major Railway Stations to the effect that if any woman passenger faces any harassment, she should immediately bring it to the notice of the Coach Attendant/TTE or to the RPF/GRP personnel on duty; and that they will extend all necessary help in taking remedial and legal action. The Railway staff on duty at stations and on trains, including RPF, have been gender sensitised and also sensitised to passenger expectations in the special training programmes held at various Railway Institutes.

4. Regular drives against male passengers travelling in ladies compartment have been conducted and prosecuted under section 162 of the Railways Act, 1989. Presently most of the passenger trains are being escorted by GRP/RPF with a view to ensuring safety and security of travelling women passengers.

5. Modules covering aspects like Gender Sensitisation & Human Rights have been made part of the syllabus in all training programmes for RPF. In addition to existing programmes, a new capsule course of 5 day's duration has also been drawn up. Training based on this new module is being introduced in the RPF training institutions shortly.

6. Consequent upon the amendments to RPF Act, 1957 and the Railways Act 1989, the RPF personnel have been entrusted with additional responsibilities of Security of Railway Premises and the passengers travelling on trains including the women passengers. RPF and GRP have been collectively manning the task of safety and security of the travelling public, including the women passengers. Meetings are held periodically between RPF and GRP to monitor the situation. On the recommendations regarding State level co-ordination committees, the Ministry of Railways wrote to the State Governments and later to the Ministry of Home Affairs for the State Governments to formally institutionalize co- ordination between the State and the Railways for better synergy and co-ordinated action with reference to security of women passengers. The matter is being pursued with the States for a holistic approach to security on the Railways.

(d): Yes, Sir.

(e): No, Sir.

(f): Action taken report is under process.